WHIRRAKEE

April 2004

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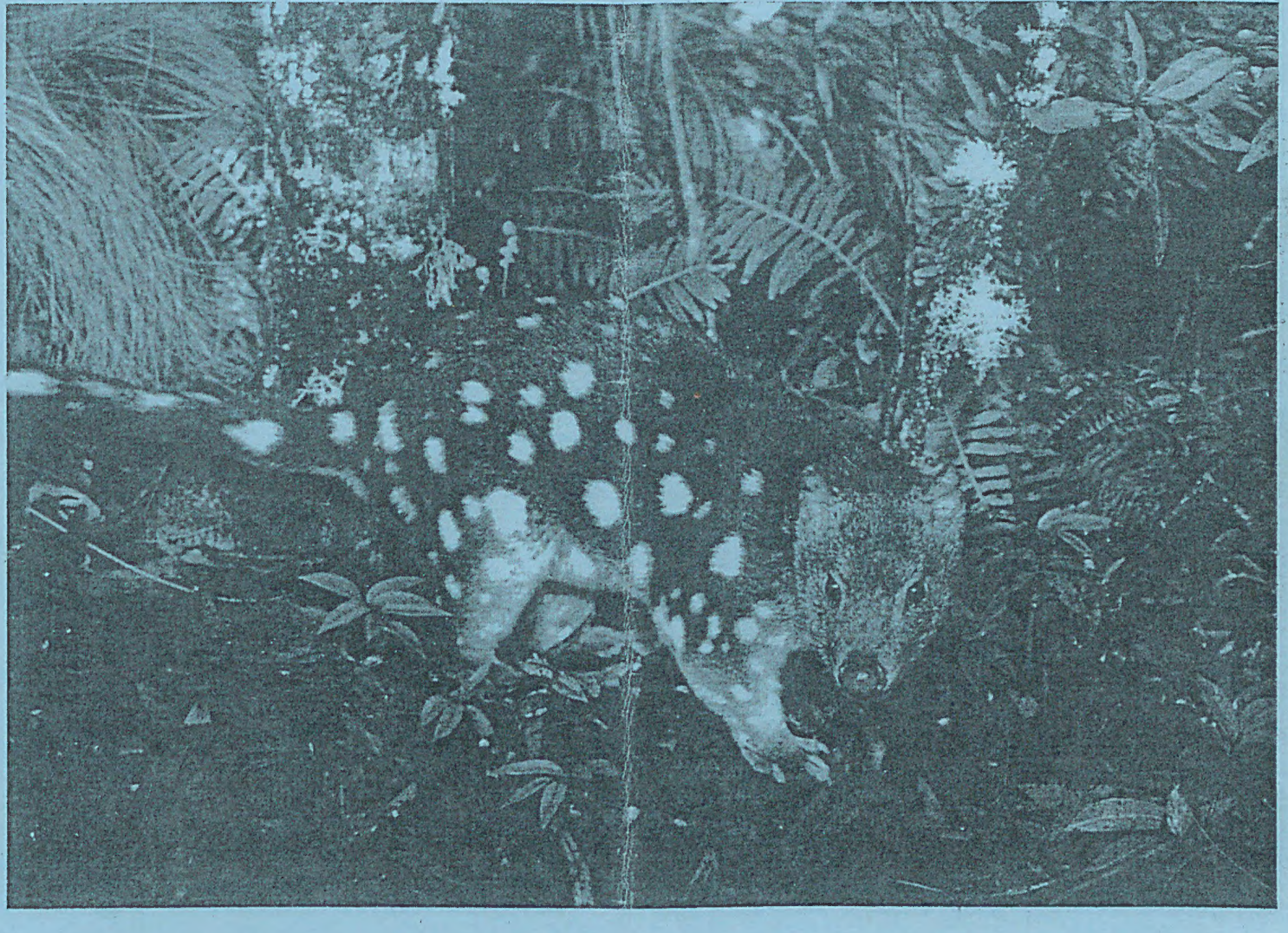

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552
ISSN 0812-423X

Office Bearers for 2003 - 2004

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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Rob Moors (ex officio), Lyn Hamilton, Maurie Lewis, Glenise Moors, Bob Ruddick, and there are 4 vacancies.

Excursions Excursions are conducted irregularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front Cover: **Photographer: Rob Watkins**

A Spotted-tailed Quoll, *Dasyurus maculatus*, as spotted by Rob Watkins. See page 5 for his article.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 25, No.3, April 2004

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles.
Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's note
This issue of Whirrakee is a wonderful one, even if I say so myself. It is full of real field-natty type articles – about raptors, quolls, waterbirds and water travels. I want to thank Rob Watkins in particular for supplying some of his great photos to accompany his contributions.
It was lovely waking up to the rain on Monday 29th March – everybody seemed to be extra friendly the following day.....Let's hope there is a bit more, helped along by our dragon over the Easter festivities.
I hope everyone has a safe, exciting and peaceful holiday.

Bird Excursion

Sun 18th April - WHIPSTICK/KAMAROOKA AREA

Meet 8.30am,
Eaglehawk Town Hall

Contact- Pam + John Land,
ph. 5436 1511
see back cover for more information and other bird excursions planned for 2004.

News from the Club Garden

by Matthew Comer

Our first working bee for this year was held on Saturday 6th March. Three of us worked for a couple of hours on what was a pleasant morning. Litter was cleaned up, a few weeds removed and some dead plants trimmed or removed. It was a reasonably easy morning's work and hopefully we can keep it that way. The lack of rain has meant that few weeds have germinated but once it rains we will need to be vigilant to keep weeds at bay.

The next working bee was to be Saturday 10th April. However, we have realised that this is Easter Saturday and many people will be unavailable. Besides, there will not really be much maintenance needed until it rains so this day is CANCELLED.

Instead we will postpone the next garden working bee until Saturday May 8th at 9am. All welcome.

Wanted – Inspiration and Presenters for Workshops

The Club is planning to run four to five workshops prior to the general meetings this year. If you have any idea(s) for a workshop, and better still, if you are prepared to run one, please let a committee member know.

Cryptogamic Extravaganza II

The above event will be held from May 28th to 31st, 2004 in the spectacular Grampians.

So, if you love the idea of spending a weekend away with like-minded naturalists and experts in the fields of macrofungi, microfungi, mosses, liverworts, lichens and freshwater algae, with activities such a bushwalking, peering down microscopes, browsing natural history books, listening to talks, and chatting and exchanging knowledge – all concerning the fascinating and tiny world of cryptogams – then THIS is the trip for you.

We will be staying at Norval Lodge in Halls Gap, which has bunk style accommodation with ensuites to each room of 6 people, a large dining room, with meals provided, and an activities room. We will have guided walks and afternoon activities led by one or two of the following experts who are supporting this trip: Tom May, Teresa Lebel, Ian Pascoe, Pina Milne, David Meagher, Bruce Fuhrer, Sharon Morley and others.

So, if you'd like to be part of the *Cryptogamic Extravaganza II*, simply fill in the registration form and send it with your deposit to
Cryptogamic Extravaganza
c/o The Field Naturalists Club Of Victoria
Locked Bag 3
PO Blackburn 3130.

N.B. Please contact Sabine Wilkens for a copy of the registration form. On it are various attendance options, accommodation and sleeping arrangement options as well as the option to present a ten minute paper.
The deposit is $50.00 per person and credit card payment can be arranged.

Building a Landcare Vision
Tuesday 27 April

How we will make the vision happen
Wednesday 28 April

To participate in building a strategy that will guide the development of Landcare in North Central for the next five years, you are invited to the above events to be held at Bendigo Pottery.
For more details contact Clare Claydon, Regional Landcare Coordinator on 54401820.

Report on Raptor Information Afternoon, BFNC Clubrooms, 21.3.04

Author: Anne Bridley

Victor Hurley and Martin Scuffins gave a highly informative lecture on various aspects of raptor care, identification and ecology to about 20 people.
Martin started by taking us through some things to look at when identifying a bird of prey: relative size, colour, obvious markings, flight, wing position, group or solitary, call, habitat, prey.

Australian diurnal birds of prey are in the Falconiformes which are divided into Falconidae (6 falcons) and Accipitridae (hawks, eagles and Osprey)

The groups are distinguished by various differences:

Accipitridae	Falconiformes
- Simple nostril	- Complex nostril (only seen very close up)
- Iris variable in colour, changes with age	- Iris mostly brown, changes little with age
- Excreta ejected at velocity (don't stand behind)	- Excreta dropped from perch
- Highly developed nest	- No nest – uses existing nest, hollow, scrape
- Unidirectional moult	- Bidirectional moult
- Broad, rounded wings	- Pointed wings
- Soaring flight	- Rapid flight
- Cryptic triangular white spot on nape	- Absent
- Weaving head movement	- Vertical (bobbing) head movement

Some of the identification points he covered in individual species were:

Wedge-tailed Eagle – tail, juveniles tend to be pale with a dark bill and adults dark with a pale bill.
Little Eagle – feathered legs, juvenile has less black on scalp, 2 forms or phases - dark and pale
Swamp Harrier – juveniles are very dark
Collared Sparrowhawk – tail in flight not rounded like Goshawk. It has a wide-eyed look.
Brown Goshawk – more solid than Sparrowhawk, frowns.
Black Kite – juveniles have brown eyes, adults red.
Peregrine Falcon – black hood and white bib, legs and eyes yellow, black-barred pale front.
Hobby – hood lighter, not as far down on forehead as Peregrine, rufous front.
Black Falcon – adults dark chocolate, juveniles darker; shorter legs and larger feet than Brown Falcon and more of a horizontal stance.
Brown Falcon – more upright stance than Black Falcon. Plumage varies from chocolate to white or creamy. Older birds at Werribee are paler.

Next Victor spoke on the Victorian Peregrine Project, which he started as a practical way of helping to conserve the species. When a species is endangered, we need to know what they can adapt to and what they can't. To determine conservation guidelines for a species, we need to survey (e.g. nest sites), determine threats (e.g. disturbance or destruction of nest) and determine and apply disturbance exclusion zones and times.

He gains corporate sponsorship by using colour pics and a logo to attract sponsors' attention and stresses what's in it for them. Quite a lot of help is in kind. His project aims to record breeding sites (620 known in Victoria), distances travelled from birth place to breeding site, dispersal patterns by age and sex, mortality causes and age structure and longevity.

Some of his findings are that our Peregrines mate for life and are bonded to the nest site area. They prefer cliffs (including quarries), but will use stick nests, tree hollows (including artificial), high-rise buildings and electricity pylons. Nests are usually a minimum of 2 km apart.

If the supply of food is interrupted to the young, stress lines form in their feathers, leading to feather fractures under stress of high speed flight. Mortality causes in the first year of life include flying accidents such as hitting wire and windows, cars and shooting.

Nearly half of all nest sites are on land not managed by Parks Victoria. Gaining the cooperation of land managers is important and is best done by face to face contact, understanding what will trigger interest and giving them a sense of ownership of the birds.

Lastly, Martin, who operates a Raptor Wildlife shelter at Ballarat, covered some important guidelines for care of injured raptors.
Is the bird really injured? It may simply be a fledgling which hasn't learnt to fly properly yet. If is is injured, wrap it in an old blanket or jacket and put in a cardboard box if possible. Watch out for sharp talons. Never put a raptor in a wire cage as this can damage the bird's feathers. Get the bird to a qualified raptor carer as soon as possible. Don't handle too much – young birds can become imprinted on humans. DSE or Healesville Sanctuary can help with names of carers.
Tell the carer where the bird was found.

He finished with an analysis of causes and outcomes for injured raptors and owls. Of 84 birds, 27 were released and 45 were euthanased. This lead to a discussion of whether being a wildlife carer was a worthwhile activity when realistically very few birds would make it back into the breeding population. His conclusion was that is was, because, amongst other reasons, it helped develop skills that are useful for rare species and society expects that injured animals should be cared for. We also have an obligation because many injuries are caused by human activities.

Contact details: The Australasian Raptor Association, president Victor Hurley (mobile 0427238898)
president@ausraptor.org.au, www.ausraprot.org.au
Central Highlands Birds of Prey Shelter AH (03) 53414623, BH (mobile) 0427414623
talmarna@netconnect.com.au, www.raptorshelter.com

Experiences with Spotted-tailed Quolls

Author: Rob Watkins

Mainland Australia's largest marsupial carnivore, the Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*, see front cover) was once widespread across Victoria's south and east. Two hundred years of habitat reduction, a widespread disease early in the nineteen hundreds, together with the effect of foxes, feral cats and 1080 poison, have greatly reduced their numbers.
In the *Complete Book of Australian Mammals*, R.Edgar wrote 'The spotted-tailed Quoll has been described as "very ferocious" and "the most combative creature of the Australian bush", with gleaming canine teeth...and a powerful crouching body; anyone with experience of it in the wild can testify to the validity of these claims' (end of quote).
I discovered another side of their nature I thought you may appreciate hearing about.
While visiting some National Parks between Gympie and Batemans Bay, I regularly inquired from 'Parks' staff, if sightings of Spotted Quolls had been made in their area.
This practice paid off in New England N.P. when staff reported these predominantly nocturnal animals regularly boarded their vehicles in daylight when garbage was being collected. The quolls were so keen to scavenge they only jumped from the vehicle once it began to move.
My mind recalled the last encounter our family had with a quoll in Tasmania some twenty five years earlier when one entered our cabin in the Cradle Valley area and raided food on the table. Hikers also have ravenous appetites so the intruded was quickly lifted upwards by the tail. Claws gripping the tablecloth caused most items to rise with the quoll. The almost casual acceptance of the treatment suggested it wasn't the first occasion this indignation had been experienced.
As the cold of the evening in the lofty heights of New England N.P. chilled our bodies, we prepared camera gear and waited in the vicinity where the garbage is collected.
Over two very late nights and at two locations several kilometres apart, we were able to identify eight individual quolls from size differences and various scars.
Upon sharing these experiences with a friend at Jindabyne we were introduced to the lady there who runs a shelter for injured wildlife.

We were told how a Spotted-tailed Quoll had been savaged by a Blue Heeler dog defending his master's poultry run.
After extensive treatment by a veterinary surgeon, the quoll was transferred to Jindabyne's wildlife shelter, where after only three days of tender loving care, the quoll showed his appreciation by sitting on his minder's shoulder, gently nuzzling an ear. A photo supported this remarkable story. Incidentally the minder wears spectacles, still held in place by two ears.

March General Meeting – Speaker: Carol Hall 'Travels in Antarctica and Patagonia'

Author: Sabine Wilkens

Carol Hall has always had a fascination with cold and snowy places. When she first came from England to Australia, she worked at Jindabyne and from there, naturally moved on to Ballarat! She has been to Alaska in 1997 and made this trip in late summer 2000.

The Antarctic peninsula and a series of antarctic islands are only two days by steamship from the tip of Argentina. The climate is thus not too extreme and, in fact, Carol said the clothing she had to pack wasn't much different to what she wears in Ballarat.
The aim of this trip was to visit several of the islands and reach the Antarctic Circle. The ship was a soviet ex-research vessel that could carry 50 passengers and had 20 russian crew. A lot of these ships now do tourist runs and this new and flourishing business is transforming the little towns from which they depart into commercial havens to cater for the western clientele. However, once in the open sea, the bustle was left behind, or replaced perhaps by the many birds that followed the ship including Wandering Albatross.

In summer, many of the Antarctic islands become ice-free and several species of penguins breed there. These birds do not have nests, rather, they pull several pebbles together just enough to hold the egg and just out of pecking distance from the nearest neighbour. The ship's crew included several scientists who explained the surroundings and the regulations tourists must adhere to (e.g. keep a 5m distance from penguins). The young were about 4 weeks old in February but they are not able to go out to sea till their plumage has changed to the adult one. Leopard Seals (minimum distance to be kept is 15m!) are aggressive and curious. They lie in wait for penguins, get hold of them and fling them in the air. This may look like a playful or perhaps cruel act but it could actually help to get their tough skin off.
Other threats to the penguins are the skuas who eat penguin eggs, chicks and carrion.

Carol had lots of slides with chin-strap penguins. We were asked to imagine the sound and smell but probably underestimated these sensations by far. Apparently the smell is frightful. All tourists had to clean or change their boots when they boarded ship again for this reason.

Many of the islands have research bases on them due to the moderate climate and Carol visited a ukrainian and a british base. Much 'rubbish', 'relics' or 'artefacts' (depending on your point of view) remains from various eras (e.g. whaling, oil exploration, research activities) and it is an interesting discussion point if these items should be cleaned up or preserved/restored, as they represent a history of human involvement with Antarctica.
Regulations have changed in that respect. Today, all workers and visitors must take everything out with them, including human waste. A novelty offered by the organisers of Carol's trip was that tourists could spend one night on the antarctic mainland. Even here, a bucket was provided for those that had to get up in the middle of the night!

One research activity that is still ongoing is the drilling of ice cores. Antarctica is the driest continent and precipitation in the form of snow mainly falls around the edge, while the centre stays relatively snow free. As a result the ice in the centre accumulates very slowly and drilling down to 1000m can reveal ice samples from over 100 000 years ago. As samples are able to be dated, events like volcanic eruptions, atomic fall-out and other pollutants can be read and dated in ice cores as well as the composition of the atmosphere prevailing at the time.

In photos, the landscape of glaciers and icebergs often appears peaceful and quiet, but icebergs are actually dynamic and often noisy. Pieces break off, an iceberg's centre of gravity changes and

the whole thing shifts and turns. In fact that part of Antarctica is a seismically active area being on the junction of a plate boundary. The colour of snow or ice isn't always white either. The older a glacier is the bluer it becomes (due to increased compression of the ice) and sometimes all sorts of colours are seen due to algal growth or penguin droppings. The shapes of icebergs are fantastic. Carol had a lot of iceberg slides and they all made us draw our breath, so wonderful were they to look at.
When the party had reached the arctic circle, the ship turned around and went back via a different route, passing different islands, a dormant volcano that last erupted only in the 1960s.

After landing back on the continent, Carol made her way to Patagonia an area south of the Andes but including their last southern tip. There are still glaciers there but overall the land is much wetter with treeless expanses and huge sheep stations. Many glaciers are in retreat, overall getting shorter and thinner. The slides were so wonderful, one could almost hear the wind howling over the steppe. Some scenes, like Mt Fitzroy, looked like straight out of the 'Lord of the Rings'. What a country!

I concur with Jane Cleary who thanked Carol for sharing her experiences and taking us to a country where many of us will never be able to go.
There is something fascinating about that part of the world. I felt this mystery recently when I read the book 'Hippolyte's Islands' by Barbara Hodgson (which I thoroughly recommend).
Thank you, Carol, for bringing a bit of that mystery along with you that night.

N.B. Rod Orr took Carol Hall and some interested club members on an impromptu excursion to the Permian glacial pavement at Lake Eppalock the next day. He promised a report from that outing. However, it did not reach the editor by the time the magazine had to go to print and will thus appear in the next edition.

For a different sort of photographic competition...
...the Australian Museum's photography competition for photographs of invertebrates. Details can be found at:
http://www.amonline.net.au/biodiversity/up_close/index.htm

NCCMA Photographic Competition – Snapshot of a Region

This photographic competition aims to celebrate the region's natural assets as identified in the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) - a blueprint for natural resource management through to 2007. The North Central RCS is implemented by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, its partners and the regional community with State and federal funds, including the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

Conditions of Entry:

- Photos should be taken within the North Central Catchment Management Authority region
- photos can be either hard copy (minimum A5 size, maximum A4) or digital image (minimum 300dpi, maximum size 4MB)
- Photos will be kept by the NCCMA
- Each photo should be accompanied by a caption, name and address.
- Permission should be obtained from any people in the photo for the NCCMA to reproduce the image
- By entering the competition, entrants will assign a limited copyright of the image to the NCCMA enabling reproduction in NCCMA communication material. Photographer will be credited whenever the images are used.
- Entrants may submit a maximum of five photos and are only eligible to win one individual prize.
- Winning entrants in the under-18 category are also eligible to win a camera fo their school.
- Entrants under 18 years of age must have adult consent.

Photos can be entered in amateur and under 18 categories.
They can be historical or recent photos, black and white or colour, digital or hard copy - but they must be from within this region.
Winning entries will be announced on World Environment Day, 5 June 2004, at the Environment Festival in Swan Hill.

Cash Prizes of up to $200 will be offered for the three best entries in each category and photos will be used in environmental displays and publications. A camera prize will be provided to the school of the best student photo.

Entries close 5pm, Friday 28 May
For further information visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au or call 54487124.
(please contact Sabine Wilkens for a copy of the entry form. Forms are also available from selected photographic shops in Bendigo).

Observation of Coots (*Fulica atra*) Breeding at Kennington Reservoir

Author: Rob Watkins

Although the actual date of hatching cannot be established, from reports received it is thought to be November 19th or 20th, 2003. I first saw the family soon after daylight on the 22nd November when the male was busy bringing soft aquatic plant material to five young, being covered most of the time on the nest.

When I returned mid-morning, the brood was on the water in the S.E. corner of the reservoir not far from the nest, which was being added to by the female coot. The male was gathering soft weed and making sure each of the brood was well fed (see photo below). The young coots were an attractive sight, with bald red heads, orange collars and with the same colour appearing lightly along the backs of their predominantly black bodies.

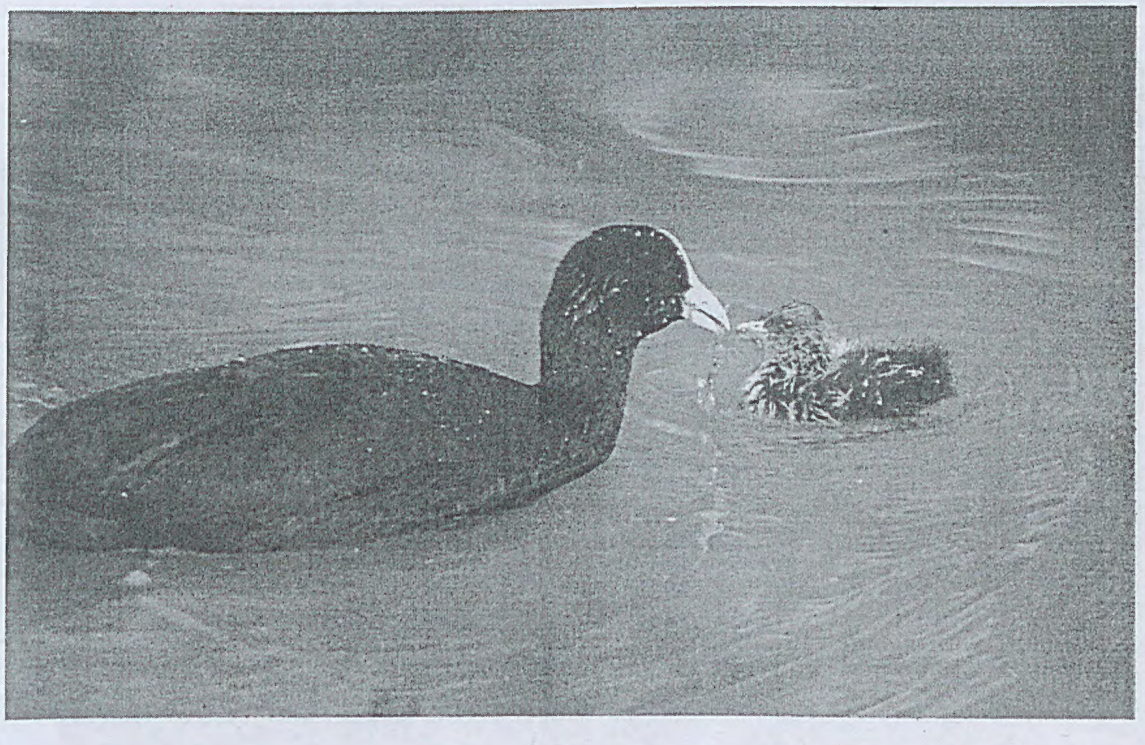
When the female returned to the brood, it was immediately obvious all was not well.

If approached by more than one chick for food, the female would attack all within the vicinity, grasping them by the head and shaking them vigorously. The young coots were much the worse for the treatment and sought cover under the bushes by the water's edge.
Another visit at midday revealed only three young coots and we assumed by the actions of ravens some distance away, they may have accounted for the missing young.

The morning of November 23nd was cold and wet and the surviving young coots were seen on the nest being covered most of the time by a parent.

Six days later, only two young were seen, each in the care of a parent. Other coots and Swamp hens (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) were obviously regarded as a threat and chased from the scene. One Swamp hen attacked a young coot pushing it below the surface with outstretched feet. In contrast, both Black Duck and Wood Duck were tolerated, almost rubbing shoulders with the young coots.

Male coot feeding tender young plant material to young (Photographer: Rob Watkins)



On the 29th November, the young being nine or ten days old, were found being fed, each in the care of a parent some five or more metres apart.

All seemed well until eventually both youngsters came together in the vicinity of the female coot. Immediately both young were vigorously attacked and harrassed until they left the water. While one was grasped by the head, the other chick made strenuous efforts to climb onto the back of the adult, presumably the safest place to be. This action was observed several times (see photo below).

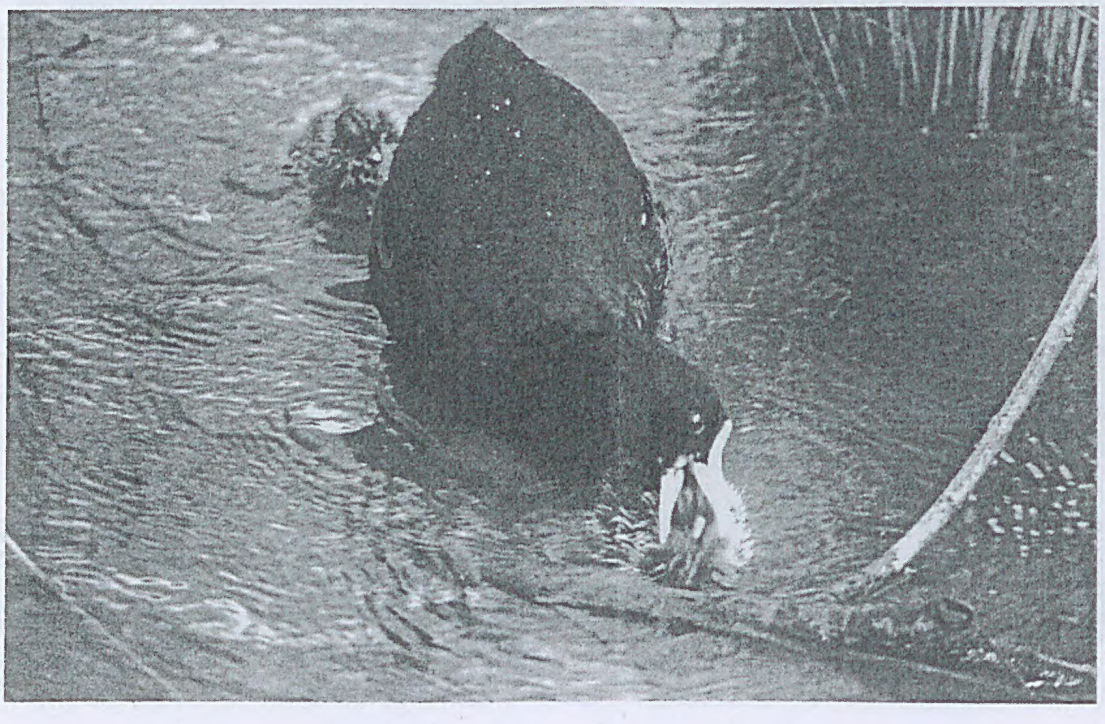
Once the young returned to the water and kept apart from each other, feeding resumed normally. The male at no time showed any signs of aggression and was seen feeding all young at any opportunity. The bouts of aggression by the female were repeated many times when the young coots came together.

By the 11th December, only one young coot was visible in the vicinity of the nest. That same day two young coots of similar size were noticed in the care of a pair of coots on the opposite side of the reservoir.
Even though repeated searching had been carried out for additional nests, nothing was found, yet, here was a pair of young coots approximately 22 days old. Could it be these youngsters had been abducted from the only known nest in the S.E. corner?
I stayed until evening to see where the young sheltered for the night and found they settles in a clump of rushes (Reed mace). Next morning, I donned waders and insepcted the area and was surprised to find only a few green leaves bent over, but no nest as such containing the usual dead leaf material.

Three days later, I inspected the same area again and found a substantial amount of material, both dead leaves and fresh green had been added.
I have serious doubts that young had been hatched out on the nest as inspected on the first visit, being no more than simply a few bent over leaves. Leaves that were still green and not showing signs of deterioration.
I cannot make claims on the evidence alone, but giving consideration to the aggression displayed to other coots by the original nest builders, I suspect the young coots found on the Crook Street side of the reservoir could have been abducted.
I have seen ducks adding young to their brood at the expense of others.
I would appreciate hearing from anyone who may be able to contribute from their observation or reading.

Female coot attacking young

Photographer: Rob Watkins



ANN Get-together in Perth

by Eddie and Joy Dell
ANN Get-together Co-Ordinators 2004
Phone: 08 92951215
e-mail: dellej@westnet.com.au

The third get-together as foreshadowed in Alice Springs in 2000 and confirmed in Tasmania at the hand-over in 2002 will be hosted by the Western Australian Naturalists' Club in the spring of 2004. Unfortunately it has not been possible to provide information earlier due to several factors including site inspection of diverse locations within economic distances of the core program venue. You should appreciate that western Australia being such a vast state with ever changing and variable climate conditions it is difficult to predict so far in advance what will be occurring in various diverse regions. It had been intended that the pre-tour embrace the everlasting fields to the north but this has proved to be impossible, logistically and weather wise, considering that the core program should take advantage of the usually better later spring conditions in the south west vegetation province that stretches from near Geraldton to the north to Albany in the south.

The get-together dates are:

- **Pre-tour - Wednesday 22 September to Saturday 25 September**
- **Core program - Saturday 25 September to Monday 4 October, with a rest day on 29 September and the last day on 4 October being a fairly informal event.**
- **Post tour - Tuesday 5 October to Friday 8 October.**

The venue including accommodation for the core program is the Perth international Big 4 Tourist Park, Hale Road Forrestfield 6058.
Arrangements have been made with management for use of the excellent facilities for evening talks etc, but you will need to make your own accommodation arrangements direct with the tourist park.
An early indication of proposed attendance, indicating which of the three events members intend to take part in would assist greatly with all of our planning arrangements.

May all you from across the continent get into the spirit of **"Perth here we come in 2004"**

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals.
It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Natural Resources and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

Weed Spotters Wanted!

To tackle potential, new and emerging weeds more effectively, the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) is developing a Weed Alert Rapid Response Plan for the State. One of its initiatives is to develop a network of weed spotters to report new weeds.

Weeds might be found in paddocks, on roadsides, in National Parks, at nurseries or the local fete or market.

To become a volunteer Weed Spotter in Victoria, send your contact details to Kate Blood at DPI, PO Box 7, Beaufort 3373 or email: Kate.Blood@dpi.vic.gov.au

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Biodiversity Alliance

The Biodiversity Alliance now has a spot on the internet. It is currently being hosted by the Victorian National Parks association at www.vnpa.org.au/whatsnew/biodiversityalliance.htm

For those interested in joining the e-mail liste-server for the Biodiversity Alliance, details are included on the website.

Flora of Australia - online - available at:

http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversiy/abrs/online-resources/abif/flora/main/

ABRS has developed three web sites to access taxonomic treatments of Australian plants. One site (at the above address) covers the majority of Australia and the other two cover oceanic Islands.

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, April 14 7.30pm
Jim Radford: 'Essential habitat for bird populations'

Wednesday, May 12 7.30pm
Ern Perkins: 'Eucalypt hunting in Western Australia'

Wednesday, June 9 7.30pm
Melody Serena: 'Ecology and Conservation of the Platypus in Victoria'

Wednesday, July 14 7.30pm
Rod Absom & Ruth Lawrence: 'The Slaty Creek Project (Calder Hwy)'

Bird Observers Group Excursions

Sun 18th April - WHIPSTICK/KAMAROOKA AREA
Meet 8.30am, Eaglehawk Town Hall
Contact- Pam + John Land, ph. 5436 1511
All welcome – please refer to further information on the area on this page.

Sun 16th May - Threatened Species Survey in National Park
8:30 am
Meet at the corner of Eaglehawk-Epsom Rd and Midland Hwy for a Swift Parrot and other threatened species search in the western Wellsford block of the Bendigo Regional Park. This is a morning excursion.

Sun 3rd October
WHIPSTICK/KAMAROOKA AREA

Meet 8.30 am. Eaglehawk Town Hall
Contact- Pam + John Land, ph. 5436 1511

Note: The Whipstick- Kamarooka area is noted for the number and diversity of bird species which might be recorded at any time of year. This most southern patch of mallee forest provides the overlap between the extent of range that many northern and or southern species of birds may venture.
On a good morning (winter) it is not uncommon to record up to 50 species of birds, including at least 13 different species of honeyeaters.

Bring: Suitable clothing and footwear for weather conditions, morning tea drink and snack, lunch optional.
Car-pooling: Can be organized at the meeting point
Beginners to birding most welcome

Fauna Group

This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Wednesday, April 28th **7.30pm**
Topic - Native mammals
(video and discussion).

BFNC Garden Working Bee

There was to be a garden working bee on the Saturday before each general meeting, at 9am.
As the next such occasion would have been Easter Saturday, the next working bee will be on **Saturday 8th May, 9am**
All welcome